



# 2008 Community Impact Report

Travis County Health and Human Services &  
Veterans Service

Sherri E. Fleming, Executive Manager

Jamie Watson, Report Author

Courtney Bissonnet Lucas, Report Author

*Travis County Commissioners Court Work Session  
April 9, 2009*

- It is our pleasure to present to you the 2008 Community Impact Report today.
- We appreciate the opportunity to discuss the report with you and to respond to any questions or feedback you might have as we proceed.



## 2008 Community Impact Report HHS/VS Vision and Mission

### **Vision**

Optimize self-sufficiency for families and individuals in safe and healthy communities

### **Mission**

Work in partnership with the community to promote full development of individual, family, neighborhood, and community potential

- The vision and mission of our Department is the anchor for all our work, so it is a helpful starting place for our discussion today.

- The Department's vision is to optimize self-sufficiency for families and individuals in safe and healthy communities.

- The Department's mission is to work in partnership with the community to promote the full development of individual, family, neighborhood, and community potential.



## 2008 Community Impact Report Goals of Quality Assurance System

- Establish a system to effectively monitor and advance the quality and impact of social service investments
- Support strategic decision-making and partnership around these investments and, in turn, responsible stewardship of these public dollars

- To advance this vision and mission, the Department has invested resources toward establishing a system to effectively monitor and advance the quality and impact of its social service programs.

- The annual Community Impact Report plays a critical role in this effort. It is the summary description of these investments and their performance.

- This report is intended to support strategic decision-making and partnership around these investments and, in turn, responsible stewardship of these public dollars.



## 2008 Community Impact Report About the Report

- HHS/VS has partnered with community-based social service providers for over 13 years
- 2008 Report examines a subset of these contracts
  - Includes 46 contracts previously managed by the City
  - HHS/VS assumed principal management of them in Jan. '07
  - Opportunity to develop and pilot quality-assurance system
- Future reports will incrementally expand to cover internal and other purchased services

•In keeping with the Department's mission, we are committed to working in partnership with the community to meet residents' needs.

•Community-based organizations are often the best positioned to provide these services given that they are often geographically and culturally embedded in the communities they serve.

•For more than 13 years, our Department has contracted with community-based organizations to provide a wide range of needed services to community residents.

•Likewise, these organizations partner with local planning bodies and other organizations to optimize their service to the community.

•The 2008 Community Impact Report examines a subset of the Department's social service investments.

•The report currently covers the 46 contracts that were transitioned from the City's Health and Human Service Department management back to our Department in January 2007.

•The transition of these contracts into our system provided an opportunity to develop and pilot an enhanced quality-assurance system.

•Over the next several years, this system will expand to cover *all* of the Department's internal and other purchased social service programs.



## 2008 Community Impact Report About the Report

- Includes the following information:
  - Financial Investment
  - Program Description
  - Client Demographics and Location
  - Performance Results
  - Highlights of interviews with contracted service providers
  - Maps of service provision locations and client zip codes
  - Highlights of related community conditions by issue area
- Covers calendar year 2008\*

•We know that most of the Court is familiar with the contents of the report, but we thought it might be helpful for those new to the Court and for others to review the main pieces of information that the report covers. There are also several new additions to the report that we'd like to note.

•The 2008 Community Impact Report includes investment, programmatic, client, and performance information about the 46 social service contracts previously mentioned.

•This year, the report has been expanded to include a snapshot of current community conditions in Travis County, maps of service provision locations and client zip codes, and highlights from interviews with the contracted service providers.

\* The report covers the calendar year 2008 contractual time period for all but HIV contracts, whose contract year begins on March 1<sup>st</sup>.



## 2008 Community Impact Report About the Report

- What **issue areas** do the programs support?
- What **community conditions** do the programs address and what changes in community conditions may impact the programs?
- What is the Department's **investment** in the programs?
- What do the programs **strive to achieve**?
- What **services** do the programs provide?
- **Who** are the programs intended to serve and who do they serve?
- **Where** do clients reside and where do they go to receive services?
- How have the programs **performed**?

•More specifically, the report addresses the following questions...

•This information is intended to provide the foundation for policy makers, program managers, and others to:

- Better understand these investments,
- Recognize and celebrate accomplishments,
- Identify areas for improvement,
- Disseminate lessons learned, and
- Identify areas warranting further research.

•Today, we're going to share with you some highlights and examples of some of the information included in the report.



## 2008 Community Impact Report Community Condition Highlights

- **Unemployment** rose from 3.7% in Feb. '08 to 6.0% in Feb. '09
- **Food stamp** recipients rose 57% between May and Dec. '08
- **Utility assistance** requests rose 41% from '07 to '08
- 37% of all households were moderately or severely **cost-burdened** in '07
- **Foreclosures** rose 33% from '07 to '08
- Local HUD Continuum of Care organizations experienced a 37% rise in **homeless** people requesting shelter between the third quarters of '07 & '08
- Nearly 1 in 5 residents lack **health insurance**

•We incorporated brief community condition overviews into the report. Following are some of the highlights from these overviews. You'll see that some of this information is similar to the information provided to the Court on February 24<sup>th</sup> though some of the statistics may be drawn from different time periods or geographic areas.

•**Unemployment** has risen steadily over the past year and is expected to rise further in 2009. The unemployment rate for Travis County was 3.7% in Feb. 2008 and rose to 6.0% by Feb. 2009. This rate remains lower than the state (6.5%) and national rates (8.1%). Please note that the Travis County unemployment rate is not seasonally adjusted, while the state and national rates are seasonally adjusted. Unemployment rates not seasonally adjusted: Texas (6.6%) and U.S. (8.9%).

•**Food instability** may also be on the rise. In Travis County, the number of food stamp recipients remained relatively stable from Jan. 2007 through May 2008 and then rose dramatically (by 57%) during the remainder of '08. Hurricane Ike contributed only partially to this increase. Food stamp participation in Travis County rose sharply (29% or by 19,114 participants) in the four months prior to Ike. Most (58%) county residents receiving food stamps are children.

•In addition, between 2007 and 2008, Austin Energy received 41% more requests for **utility assistance** and experienced a 33% increase in the number of customers with deferred payment plans.

•In 2007 – a more prosperous year for the County – an estimated 76,768 households (or 20% of all households) in Travis County spent between 30% and 49.9% of their income on housing. HUD categorizes a household with this type of housing-expense ratio as **moderately cost-burdened**. And, an estimated 65,890 households (or 17% of all households) spent 50% or more of their income on housing, which HUD defines as severely cost burdened; renters accounted for more than two-thirds (68%) of this population. High housing cost-burdens make many Travis County residents vulnerable to losing their housing.

•Foreclosure rates rose 33% from nearly 3,500 in 2007 to nearly 5,000 in 2008.

•Local HUD Continuum of Care organizations experienced a 37% rise in **homeless** people requesting shelter between the third quarters of '07 & '08

•Nearly 1 in 5 residents lack **health insurance** and the number may grow if unemployment and underemployment rates continue to rise.

•The economic downturn is expected to continue to increase demand for social services. At the same time, resources are shrinking. Donations to local nonprofit organizations have been falling. Likewise, local, state, and federal revenue has declined. However, changes in national and state funding bear watching in the coming year. The impact of these economic trends and related legislative initiatives are currently unknown but may be significant.



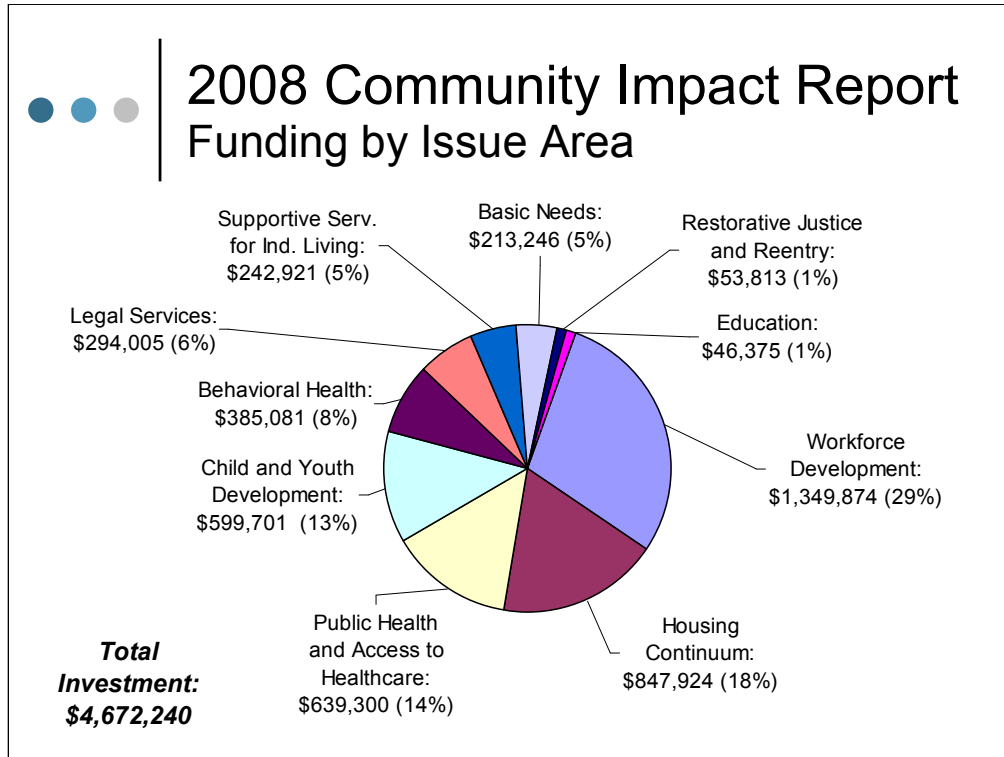
## 2008 Community Impact Report Service Provider Interview Highlights

- **Economic conditions** increased the number of clients and client needs
- Greater **diversity** among clients
- Increase in client **mental health/substance abuse** issues
- More clients **moving out of Austin** toward Del Valle, Pflugerville, and other outlying areas of the county
- Challenges due to changes in **funding** and funding requirements
- Increased **staff and facility needs**

### *Introduction:*

- Agency site visits were conducted in Spring 2008 by Program Leads
- Data were gathered on 40% of social service agencies (16 of 40). Data represent 20 of the 46 TCHHS/VS contracts (43.5%). Note: because of the small sample size, data must be interpreted with caution and findings may not represent agency experiences as a whole.
- As a result of **economic conditions**, agencies saw increases in referrals, workloads, and/or demand for services (7 agencies); agencies also noted the impact of the economic climate on clients, such as increased housing and transportation costs (4 agencies)
- Agencies also found greater **diversity** among their clientele, including increases in Spanish-speaking clients (3 agencies); and increases in ethnic minorities, African-Americans, or populations from foreign countries (3 agencies)
- Additionally, agencies witnessed a rise in client **mental health/substance abuse** issues (4 agencies).
- Several agencies noticed that an increasing number of their clients were **moving out of Austin** (3 agencies).
  - The maps, now included in the report, illustrate the residence of clients when they began participating in the program. This may be helpful in identifying the extent of this trend.
- Several agencies also noted challenges due to **funding changes**, specifically in United Way funding and/or Continuum of Care shifts (3 agencies). They also reported decreased funding or changes in funding requirements (3 agencies).
- Finally, agencies reported increased **staff and facility needs** due to staff turnover (2 agencies); the need for additional staff (3 agencies; of those, 2 noted need for bilingual staff); challenges around facility capacity (3 agencies); and an increase in crime around their agencies (2 agencies).





•The social service contracts included in this report represent nearly \$5 million in county investments, and this slide represents the percent of these dollars by issue area.

- Workforce Development accounts for the largest share (with 29%) of total funding.
- Housing Continuum follows with 18%

•We've tried to be thoughtful in our approach to better align our contracts with research-based categories that reflect the program's central goals. As such, much of the services that have been traditionally referred to as Basic Needs now appear in other issue areas. Some programs do remain in the Basic Needs issue area, but a larger number are found in other issue areas, such as Housing Continuum and Supportive Services for Independent Living.

•Please note that these amounts do not include our direct services through Family Support Services, nor do they include the additional investments made by the Court in the previous month.

•It is also important to note that this funding distribution is likely to change in the future, with the incorporation of other contracts and internal programs.

•For example, the investment for Child and Youth Development does not currently include our internal after-school program. Similarly, the Public Health issue area does not include the public health interlocal, which is a nearly \$2.5 million dollar investment.

•For a brief description of the goals and services for each issue area, please refer to the table in the Executive Summary on page 14.



## 2008 Community Impact Report Client Demographics

Of all clients with known demographics:

- **Gender:** 58% were female and 42% were male
- **Race:** 64% were White and 28% were Black or African-American
- **Ethnicity:** 37% were Hispanic or Latino
- **Age:** 25% were <18; 28% were 37-55; and 23% were 25-36
- **Income:** 37% had incomes below 50% of the FPIG;  
26% had incomes between 50% and 100% of the FPIG

- Clients participating in more than one program are counted multiple times
- Clients with known demog. may not be representative of clients with unknown ones

•FPIG = Federal Poverty Income Guideline level

•Just a final note about **income** limits and services. Contracted services work in tandem with those provided directly by the Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service Department.

•The Department is the largest provider of emergency assistance for individuals and families within Travis County.

•For elderly or disabled individuals, the County emergency assistance program income guidelines limit participation to households at or below 125% of the FPIG.

•But, the income guideline limit for all other people is 50% of the FPIG. This income level represents, for example, an annual income of \$5,200 for a single-person household and \$10,600 for a four-person household.

•Contracted programs serve clients with incomes up to 200% of the FPIG to more effectively meet the full range of needs in our community.

•The report provides this information for each contracted program. For example, if you turn to the Workforce Development section and then turn to page 84, you will see the particular demographics for the clients of Austin Area Urban League program.

### **Additional Information (if needed):**

•The service providers collected client demographic data, when possible.

•**Income** level data were reported for **77% of clients**. The remaining **demographic** data were provided for **91% to 95% of clients**.

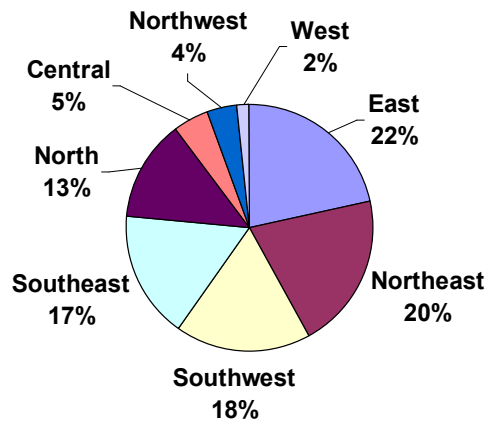
•Client demographic data may be unreported for reasons such as: protection of client privacy and difficulty obtaining data (e.g., **due to services delivered via outreach or at large-scale events**).

•Client ages not reported above: 12% were 18-24; 8% were 56-75; and 4% were 75 and over.



## 2008 Community Impact Report

### Client Zip Codes in Travis County



- Clients participating in more than one program are counted multiple times
- Clients with known zip codes may not be representative of clients with unknown ones

•Of clients with known zip codes within Travis County, 59% were located in eastern areas of the county when they began participating in the program.

- 22% of clients were in the East area
- 20% were in the Northeast area
- 18% were in the Southwest area
- 17% were in the Southeast area

•We should note that these categories of geographic areas were designed to provide a frame of reference when locating zip codes on the maps. Appendix E explains how zip codes were categorized into these areas.

•As with demographics, the report provides zip code information for each contracted program. So, if you turn to page 85, you will see the particular residential zip codes of the clients of the Austin Area Urban League program.

#### **Additional Information (if needed):**

•When possible, the contracted service providers documented the zip code where clients resided when they entered the program.

•Service providers collected residential information for **86% of all clients**.

•Client zip code data may be unreported for reasons such as: clients were homeless at entry into the program, protection of client privacy, and difficulty obtaining data (e.g., due to services delivered via outreach or at large-scale events).



- This year, we were able to develop maps that capture the zip codes where clients resided at entry into the program as well as service provision locations.
- Service provision locations reflect the physical addresses where contracted services are provided and where clients actually had to go to receive services.
- The Workforce Development map is shown here as an example. You can see the full version of this map on page 74.

**Additional Information (if needed):**

- Addresses include locations where contracted services are provided to clients, such as: in-person client intake, screening and assessment locations; training or counseling locations; shelters and transitional housing; and schools, hospitals, courthouses, and correctional facilities.
- The following services were not included: services provided in-home, via telephone, or outside Travis County; community monitoring; events and social/recreational activities (e.g., job or health fairs); on-the-job training; outreach and recruitment activities; referrals; transportation; volunteer or staff training; and program administration locations where clients do not access services at the location.



## 2008 Community Impact Report Performance Results

Percent of performance measures meeting or exceeding 90% of their contractual performance goals:

- 82% of *output* performance measure goals
- 86% of *outcome* performance measure goals

•The social service contracts included in this report have a wide range of goals, objectives, services, and performance measures.

•In 2008, the goals for the vast majority of all performance measures were achieved. Specifically, 82% of the goals for output measures were met and 86% of the goals for outcome measures were met.

•Meeting these goals means that the performance measure met or exceeded at least 90% of the contractual performance goal.

•We set the bar high and continue to be pleased with the contribution that these service providers offer to our community. We are especially pleased that the service providers were able to accomplish so much in spite of the economic downturn over the past year.

•We should note that the report includes detailed performance information within the report's individual program sections. These sections include important explanations for variance in performance, as provided by the service providers.

•For an example, let's turn to page 45 in the report. Here you can see all the program's performance measures, goals, and actual results. You see that the program did very well across both outcome measures but fell short across the output measures. The text explains that one of the reasons was the unexpected placement of FLDS church members and their children into the program. These placements required the shelter to significantly limit other placements due to housing requirements of FLDS church members. This impacted the shelter for around 90 days during the contract year – a significant time period that understandably impacted that program's results.

•Such information is critical to providing context and meaning to these summary performance results, so we strongly recommend that performance results only be considered with this contextual information in mind.

•We should also note that it is our interest that service providers fulfill their contractual obligations but – at the same time, in some cases – it is also important for them to be responsive to the changing needs of the community. Flexible and responsive service provision is critical to ensuring that the needs of Travis County residents are met even as those needs shift.



## 2008 Community Impact Report Key Upcoming Initiatives

- Enhance value for Department, Court, and community
  - Incorporate internal and other purchased social services
  - Align report with Department's strategic plan
- Bolster quality of information provided
  - Strengthen performance measures
  - Enhance maps
  - Strengthen data-quality systems
- Targeted program evaluations

•We have several key upcoming initiatives intended to enhance the value of this report for the Department, the Court, and the community at large. This year, we will begin incorporating other purchased services and our internal, direct services into the report. This expansion will give a fuller picture of the Department's social service investments and their results. Also, as the Department's strategic planning process progresses, we will work to ensure that the Community Impact Report and related systems align to support the vision and mission of that plan.

•Given that decisions are only as good as the information upon which they are based, we will continue our efforts to bolster the quality of the information included in this report. In particular, we will begin an incremental assessment of the performance measures themselves and, when possible, standardize them based on research and stakeholder input.

•We will also continue to build our skills in GIS mapping and plan on enhancing the maps, for example, by incorporating precinct boundaries. We will also begin exploring strategies for incorporating social indicator data, such as poverty concentrations, to provide greater context to the information. We will also continue to work with the service providers to build our understanding of the definitions of the performance and to improve data-collection processes.

•Finally, as needed, we will continue to build upon and expand the evaluations that are currently underway, for example with the Rapid Employment Model. We understand that program evaluations, produced through a sound methodology that includes solid control groups, is critical to understanding a program's true impact. We also understand that the resources required to undertake full evaluations is notable and, so, will be thoughtful in selecting programs for such evaluations.

•Please let us know if you have any questions. And, as always, we welcome any feedback you have about additional information that would be helpful to include in future reports. It is always a primary interest of ours for the report to provide you the information you need to make decisions.



## 2008 Community Impact Report Availability and Questions

- The report is available online at: <http://tinyurl.com/amjy2c>
- Questions and feedback about the report can also be directed to: Jamie Watson ([jamie.watson@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:jamie.watson@co.travis.tx.us)) and Courtney Bissonnet Lucas ([courtney.lucas@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:courtney.lucas@co.travis.tx.us))

•As we strive to do business in an environmentally responsible manner, the Department of Health and Human Services & Veterans Service is publishing the *2008 Community Impact Report* electronically through the Travis County website.

•We always appreciate feedback and thoughts for improving our report and processes. If you have any questions or requests, please feel free to contact the report authors, who also serve as the Department's Quality Assurance Specialists for Performance Measurement and Evaluation.